

The Act extends several expiring provisions of last year's bill that are critical to HUD's ability to continue its activities, including demolishing and replacing the worst public housing, supporting movement from dependency to work, and streamlining low-income housing assistance and FHA mortgage insurance programs. The bill also provides the tools necessary to reduce the costs of section 8 renewals for FHA-insured properties, and fully funds my request for the Housing Opportunities for Persons With Aids program.

I am pleased that the bill continues to support States and cities through HUD's key economic development programs—Community Development Block Grants, and the Home Investment Partnerships program. Funding provided for the Youthbuild program will help at-risk youth learn valuable skills, that will enable them to gain employment and break the cycle of poverty. The bill also provides needed capital and operating funds to support the sound operation of over one million public housing apartments.

The Act fully funds my request for the medical care of this Nation's veterans and includes incremental funding for a VA hospital at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California. I am, however, disappointed that the bill does not provide necessary funding for an additional hospital in Brevard County, Florida.

The bill fully funds the Space Station program, and includes needed buyout authority for NASA as it moves to restructure itself for the future.

I am concerned, however, that the bill does not provide funding for NASA's or EPA's contribution to the innovative GLOBE program. This unwarranted change of direction will adversely impact thousands of teachers and students in 2,000 U.S. schools and in 35 other countries who have invested their resources, time, and energy in this valuable program. I plan to press the Congress to include funding for GLOBE in the omnibus 1997 funding bill that my Administration is negotiating with the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
September 26, 1996

NOTE: H.R. 3666, approved September 26, was assigned Public Law No. 104-204.

Remarks on Departure for Capitol Hill and an Exchange With Reporters *September 26, 1996*

Situation in the Middle East

The President. Good afternoon. I'd like to say a few words about the situation in the Middle East. I deeply regret the injuries and the loss of life we've seen in the West Bank and Gaza in the last few days. It points to the urgency for both sides not only to end the violence but to take positive steps to resolve the issues that divide them.

Over the past 24 hours we have been in constant touch with the Israelis and the Palestinians. Our message to them is this: It is in everyone's interest to resolve their differences peacefully, to work together on security, and to avoid any actions that could make progress on the peace between Israelis and Palestinians more difficult.

The events of the past 2 days stand out precisely because we have made so much progress toward peace in these past few years. Violence was becoming the exception, not the rule. The overwhelming majority of Israelis and Palestinians want peace, and they have been doing the hard work to build it.

So again, let me say: I ask both sides to end this violence, to get back to the business of peace, to implement the agreements they've reached, to resolve their differences through negotiations.

Q. Mr. President, are the Israelis wrong to open this tunnel? It seems like to some people it may have been really a provocation.

The President. Let me say, I have said repeatedly, and I would like to just repeat what I have said consistently: I think that all the parties should avoid any actions which are likely to undermine the progress of the peace. And now, the important thing is to end the violence and to get back to implementing those peace agreements.

Wolf? [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network]

Q. Do you think, Mr. President, the Israelis should seal up that tunnel since that seems to have started this chain of events?

The President. What I think is, they need to end the violence, and they need to discuss these matters between them, and they need to ask themselves, all of them do: What can we do to avoid unnecessarily provocative actions?

Let me also say to you that in a larger sense, what is important is that some progress be made on the issues that are the subject of the agreement. Now, we were supposed to have talks begin again this week to resolve those larger issues, and I had hoped that those talks—and I had some indication, some reason to believe that those talks could lead to some concrete progress which would diminish these tensions instead of seeing them aggravated.

So all I can tell you today is, I hope again that everyone will heed our position, which is to do nothing that will provoke a disruption and instead to get back to the talks and to the business of resolving the differences.

Q. Mr. President, have you spoken, with Chairman Arafat or Prime Minister Netanyahu, and what have they told you?

The President. Secretary Christopher has talked with Prime Minister Netanyahu more than once, and we have been in touch several times with Chairman Arafat through the channels that we always use, through our team there, to talk with him, and I have had extensive and regular reports over the last 2 days about this.

So we are working with them, and we are working with them to try to work this out to restore order and peace, and then to get on with the talks. We are prepared to do anything we can that will be of assistance, and I've made that clear, that I personally was prepared to do anything I could. The Secretary of State has worked hard on this. He's done a fine job as always in these matters. And I've been kept completely informed by him of everything that is going on. So, we're working hard.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any plans to talk with Prime Minister Netanyahu today?

The President. You know, he was in Europe, and he cut his trip short to go back to the Middle East, which I think was a very good thing for him to do. And when I come back from the Hill today, I'm going to get

another update, and then we'll make a decision about what's the most helpful thing I can do. I'm certainly prepared to put in whatever time and effort I can on this to be a constructive force. That's the most important thing.

Thanks.

Q. Have you offered to send a U.S. delegation over there if that's necessary, sir?

The President. Well, I think—let me just say—I would say on that—let me give you the same answer I did before to the other question. I'm going to be guided very heavily by Secretary Christopher's advice on that.

We are watching these events as they unfold, trying to keep up with them, trying to do what we can to have a constructive impact. And after I talk to him, if he believes that's the right thing to do, then that's something I would consider. But I do not—I want to do what will be constructive. I do not want to do anything that will not be helpful.

So, we're going to talk again today and see where we are and then see what the next step should be.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Democratic Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

September 26, 1996

Legislative Accomplishments

The President. Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. Let me join the Vice President in thanking Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt for their strong leadership in this session of Congress. Here at the end we have had a real spate of positive legislation coming out: improving our environment through safe drinking water and the pesticide protection act; health care reform; reforms in the pension systems for people who work for small businesses; the raise in the minimum wage. This has been a remarkable, remarkable last few days, and these leaders have worked very hard to gather sup-